

Municipality of North Cowichan Environmental Advisory Committee AGENDA

Tuesday, June 22, 2021, 1:30 p.m.
Electronically

Pages

1. CALL TO ORDER

This meeting, though electronic, is open to the public and all representations to the Environmental Advisory Committee form part of the public record. At this time, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, public access to meeting rooms at North Cowichan Municipal Hall is not permitted, however, this meeting may be viewed on the District's live stream webcast at www.northcowichan.ca/meetings.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Purpose: To consider any items of business not included in the Agenda, that are of an urgent nature, must be introduced and approved at the time the agenda is adopted. Matters must be taken up in the order that they are listed unless changed at this time.

Recommendation:

That the Committee approve the agenda as circulated [or as amended].

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

3 - 5

Purpose: To consider if there were any errors or omissions prior to adopting the minutes.

Recommendation:

That the Committee adopt the minutes of the meeting held May 18, 2021.

4. BUSINESS

4.1. EAC Agenda Items

6 - 8

Purpose: To prioritize the list of subjects in sections B and C of the EAC 2021 Workplan for possible review by the Environmental Advisory Committee.

Recommendation:

That Council endorse the EAC 2021 Workplan [as amended], and direct staff to schedule the subjects on future EAC agendas with first priority for subjects in Section A of the workplan.

4.2. Forestry Review Input

9 - 10

Purpose: Solicit input from the Environmental Advisory Committee and report back with other educational opportunities that the municipality can host and/or share online as part of the forestry review.

For Reference:

The motion that passed at the June 16, 2021 Regular Council meeting is as follows:

That Council direct the Mayor and Staff to:

- *Invite Suzanne Simard to give a public virtual presentation about her work with local context on our forests as part of the education for the MFR review followed by a question and answer period, and that staff be directed to report back to Council on the costs and the format.*
- *Send a letter to Bond Group Entertainment, inviting them to film Suzanne Simard's memoir Finding the Mother Tree in North Cowichan.*

And that Council direct Staff to solicit input from the following groups and report back with other educational opportunities we can host and/or share online as part of the forestry review, starting as soon as possible, prior to the public engagement process:

- *Forestry and Environment Staff,*
- *the Forestry Advisory Committee,*
- *the Forestry Review Working Group,*
- *Forestry Review project consultants,*
- *Environmental Advisory Committee, and*
- *Resource Works*

4.3. Cowichan Land Trust - OCP Feedback letter for information

11 - 14

Purpose: To receive the feedback from the Cowichan Land Trust regarding the Official Community Plan Update Project for information.

For Reference:

The motion that passed at the June 2, 2021 Regular Council meeting is as follows:

That the advice and recommendations from the Cowichan Land Trust regarding Official Community Plan Update Project be referred to Modus, the OCP Advisory Committee and the Environmental Advisory Committee (for information).

5. NEW BUSINESS

6. ADJOURNMENT

Municipality of North Cowichan Environmental Advisory Committee MINUTES

May 18, 2021, 1:30 p.m.
Electronically

Members Present	Councillor Kate Marsh, Chair Neil Anderson Cam Campbell Per Dahlstrom Dr. Jana Kotaska Ashley Muckle Sandy McPherson (arrived at 2:58 p.m.) Dr. Geoffrey Strong Dr. Shannon Waters
Members Absent	Bruce Coates David Coulson Sandra McPherson Dr. Jesse Patterson
Staff Present	David Conway, Director, Engineering Projects Dave Preikshot, Senior Environmental Specialist Shaun Chadburn, Environmental Programs Coordinator Tricia Mayea, Deputy Corporate Officer
Others Present	Camille Lefrancois, Urban Planner, Diamond Head Consulting

1. CALL TO ORDER

There being a quorum present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Committee, by unanimous consent, named Cam Campbell as Acting Chair for this meeting if the need arises.

The following late item was added to the agenda:

- North Cowichan Growth Scenarios Webinar - added to New Business.

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That the Committee approve the agenda as amended.

CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That the Committee adopt the minutes of the meeting held May 4, 2021.

CARRIED

4. BUSINESS

4.1 Diamond Head Consulting Presentation regarding the Environmental Policy review

Camille Lefrancois, Urban Planner, Diamond Head Consulting, provided a presentation regarding the Environmental Policy review and answered questions of the Committee members. A copy of the presentation materials was appended to the agenda.

Chair Marsh left the meeting at 2:25 p.m. and Cam Campbell assumed the Chair. Chair Marsh returned to the meeting and resumed the Chair at 2:29 p.m.

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That the Environmental Advisory Committee recommends that Council authorize Diamond Head Consulting to provide a simple comparison of their Environmental Policy and Regulation Review report dated February 16, 2021 recommendations with the Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) recommendations from the May 4, 2021 EAC meeting on the Climate Action Energy Plan. CARRIED

4.2 Discussion regarding a Green Circular Economy Eco-Industrial Park concept

Per Dahlstrom provided a presentation on the concept and merits of the District of North Cowichan spearheading a green circular economy eco-industrial park. A copy of the presentation materials was appended to the agenda.

Sandy McPherson arrived at the meeting at 2:58 p.m.

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That the Environmental Advisory Committee recommends that Council direct staff to consider an eco-industrial lands policy consistent with the anticipated Climate Action Energy Plan update recommendations. CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

That the Environmental Advisory Committee recommends that Council endorse a grant application to the Community Energy Association's (CEA) "Game Changer" Climate Action Implementation Capacity Grants fund, subject to initial screening by the CEA. CARRIED

5. NEW BUSINESS

5.1 North Cowichan Growth Scenarios Webinar

The EAC members were encouraged to participate in the Growth Scenarios Webinar being hosted by North Cowichan on Thursday, May 20, 2021 at 07:00 PM. You can register by visiting www.northcowichan.ca/OCP.

The EAC members were also encouraged to participate in North Cowichan's Growth Management survey, which is available online until June 6, 2021. The feedback gathered from the survey will help inform the development of North Cowichan's updated Official Community Plan (OCP).

6. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting ended at 4:08 p.m.

Certified by Recording Secretary

Signed by Chair

2021 EAC WORKPLAN

Subject	Item Description	Requestor	Date Requested	Strategic Plan Relation	EAC Importance(H,M,L)	EAC Comments
A. THE FOLLOWING LIST RELATES TO SUBJECTS THAT HAVE BEEN REFERRED BY COUNCIL TO THE EAC FOR ADVICE						
Staff to schedule with EAC as Priority items for response						
A1	Somenos Marsh Presentation on Riparian Protection	Council	18-Nov-20	n/a	high	
A2	Ban on Single Use Plastics	Council	18-Mar-21	n/a	high	
A3	3137 Henry Road Rezoning application	Council	13-May-21	n/a	high	waiting for referral response from ALR
A4	Cowichan Land trust- OCP Feedback letter for information	Council	2-Jun-21	n/a	high	
A5	Seek input from the EAC regarding educational opportunities the DNC can host or share online as part of the forestry review	Council	16-Jun-21	n/a	high	
A6	Advise EAC of CAEP Timelines set by council	Council		n/a	high	staff to inform EAC of timeline
B. THE FOLLOWING LIST RELATES TO SUBJECTS THAT HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED IN COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN						

2021 EAC WORKPLAN

Subject	Item Description	Requestor	Date Requested	Strategic Plan Relation	EAC Importance(H,M,L)	EAC Comments
EAC to provide recommendation to Council						
B1	Biodiversity Protection Policy - Project Charter Review with Council and EAC	staff / council		Strategic plan and 2021 business plan for ENV		referral anticipated June 21
B2	generate draft policies pursuant to Council direction on CAEP actions	staff/council		Strategic plan and 2021 business plan for ENV		anticipation following next draft of OCP update
B3	CAEP Community Grants/ TOR	Staff Initiated		Implementing the CAEP is in the Council strategic plan- update the terms of reference to be current		
B4	Cowichan Green Community Agricultural Center - solar panels on roof - community grant	Councillor Marsh	10-Dec-20	Related to Strategic plan in regards to renewable energy and implementing the CAEP		
B5	Cascadia Bioenergy - Cascadia Bioenergy is a renewable energy company focused on producing clean energy from local forestry resources . Our vision is to displace fossil fuels in power generation converting non-merchantable, post-harvest forest fibre into biocoal using a novel torrefaction technology.	Councillor Marsh	9-Mar-21	Exploring feasibility of District Energy systems is a council priority		
B6	Dairy Farmer looking for land (or a longterm lease) and funding to install a biogas RNG digester.	Joshua Larson/ Councillor Marsh	5-Mar-21	Tangentially related to District Energy which is a council priority - also related to implementation of CAEP		

2021 EAC WORKPLAN

Subject	Item Description	Requestor	Date Requested	Strategic Plan Relation	EAC Importance(H,M,L)	EAC Comments
B7	Developing a Community Energy Utility Utilizing Solar Photo Voltaic	Peter Nix/Councillor Marsh	20-Nov-20	In Council Strategic Plan to research solar potential to replace fossil fuels		

C. THE FOLLOWING LIST RELATES TO SUBJECTS THAT HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED BY OTHERS

EAC to review merit and provide recommendation to Council

C1	Green Hydrogen Generation in alberta	Niel Anderson (EAC member)	3-Mar-21			
C2	Native Plant Demonstration Project on the Beverly St. Dyke	Bruce Coates (EAC member and Cow Valley naturalists)	27-Nov-20			
C3	Woodstoves and Backyard Burning	Councillor Marsh	24-Dec-20			
C4	Bees and Natural Resources	Council/Tanis Bapty	26-Apr-21			
C5	EAC Input on Forestry Review	Councillor Marsh	16-Jun-21			

Council Member Motion

Notice given on: Wednesday, June 2, 2021

Meeting Date Wednesday, June 16, 2021
From Councillor Sawrie
Subject Inviting Dr. Suzanne Simard to Speak at North Cowichan

Background

There is a strong interest by the public to share their input about forestry practices and the future use of the Municipal Forest Reserve.

While we are paused on public engagement for the forestry review and as part of that process when it resumes, it would be beneficial for everyone to have a foundational understanding of forest ecology and what is required to maintain a healthy forest, before formulating opinions and making decisions on how to move forward.

With a PhD in Forest Sciences and as a Professor of Forest Ecology, Suzanne Simard can share the findings of her work and research and science-based knowledge to help us understand the impacts of the different scenarios we will be considering and how to best manage those impacts to promote resilient forests for the future, especially given our changing climate. Not only is she an expert in her field, but she also has expertise in the ecology of our local forests and particular climate having studied and done field work in BC.

As part of educating ourselves about our forests and forest management practices, this should only be the beginning. We should also turn to forestry and environment staff, the Forestry Advisory Committee, the Forestry Review Working Group and project consultants for further suggestions on educational opportunities we can host and or share through the engagement process and online.

As for the second part of the motion, knowing we have some of the most beautiful forests in BC, it is logical that filming for a memoir about Suzanne Simard's work, could be done at least in part, in North Cowichan. This would be an excellent opportunity to showcase our forests to the world and would provide economical benefits for hotels, restaurants and other local businesses while also generating local employment opportunities.

Recommendation

That Council direct the Mayor and Staff to:

1. Invite Suzanne Simard to give a public virtual presentation about her work with local context on our forests as part of the education for the MFR review followed by a question and answer period.
2. Send a letter to Bond Group Entertainment, inviting them to film Suzanne Simard's memoir *Finding the Mother Tree* in North Cowichan.

And that Council direct Staff to solicit input from the following groups and report back with other educational opportunities we can host and/or share online as part of the forestry review, starting as soon as possible, prior to the public engagement process:

- Forestry and Environment Staff,
- the Forestry Advisory Committee,
- the Forestry Review Working Group and
- Forestry Review project consultants

Attachment(s):

Ted Talk: How Trees Talk to Each Other:

https://www.ted.com/talks/suzanne_simard_how_trees_talk_to_each_other?language=en

UBC Forestry talk: Dispatches from The Mother Tree Project: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=--secsuooko>

The Mother Tree Project - <https://mothertreeproject.org/>



Cowichan Land Trust

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Attention: Municipality of North Cowichan (MNC)
Staff and Council

Re: COWICHAN COMMUNITY LAND TRUST (CCLT)
Submission to the MUNICIPALITY OF NORTH COWICHAN
OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN (OCP) PROCESS

May 25, 2021

Greetings,

Thank you for the invitation to offer input regarding the Official Community Plan review. The CCLT board directors have collaborated to provide the following submission.

Who we are:

The [Cowichan Community Land Trust](#) is a non-profit society based in Duncan, British Columbia. It is a registered charity in Canada and is entitled to hold conservation covenants in British Columbia. It was founded in 1995 by a group of concerned citizens who wished to help landowners find alternatives to the degradation of natural areas and wildlife habitat.

Our mission:

We help to take care of the land and water in the Cowichan Valley for the benefit of all life now and in the future. We do this by acquiring land, entering into conservation agreements, and by providing education and support to individuals and other groups who are caring for the land.

Our view:

We applaud the foresight of the MNC in this community engagement to jointly vision our collective future and are grateful for the opportunity to make this submission. The CCLT is proud of its accomplishments over the last 25-years and energized by the community recognition that our organization receives at important times of reflection and decision such as this.

Committed to the conservation and protection of natural areas and biological diversity for future generations.



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Broadly, the CCLT's mandate is guided by three considerations with respect to land:

1. A recognition that endemic ecosystems are the basis of human health and prosperity,
2. Urgency; recent research indicates that for terrestrial ecosystems to be sustained in perpetuity, 30% - 70% of their land base should be protected, (Holt, R.F. and [the 2010 CVRD State of the Environment Report](#), also the [2014 Landbase Update](#)) and,
3. A call to action; we provide assistance to those who would seek to protect the land in the form of educational support, on-the-ground restoration work, conservation strategies, and the establishment of conservation covenants.

The OCP:

We have reviewed the existing 2011 OCP (Bylaw 3450) and recognize many policy elements that are pertinent to or aligned with the CCLT's mandate. It is encouraging that the Municipality already recognizes many of the attributes that are important to us and our members.

Of the five overarching Principles, we particularly embrace the expressions of sustainability, smart growth, environmental health, and community engagement.

The comprehensive listing of assets and challenges touches on many shared concerns. We would draw particular attention to the importance of these subject areas: Rural Land Use, Municipal Forests, Coastal Douglas-fir Zone, Water and Watersheds, Climate Change, Parks Acquisition, and a Regional Approach.

The recognition of forests and biodiversity is a central concern. Our own consideration of forest land is reported in ["Seeing Cowichan Forests Beyond Trees"](#) published in 2020. This document explores the dominance of private forest land in this region and opportunities to capture ecological vitality and benefit for the greater public through creative policies. Local governments can assist private forest landowners who may wish to protect forest land values. We urge the OCP to champion productive forest land management through an ecological lens and to recognize models of incremental forest management as preferable to wholesale industrial plantation management. (Ref. 2.1.2.3) By incentivizing a more sustainable management style, the forests are given a better chance to "guard our environment" and help our community "adjust to climate



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change.” In future we imagine that forestry progress might be measured by land area under ecological management, biodiversity richness, or carbon sequestered.

We endorse the current OCPs mention of “ecosystem health, biodiversity, and critical habitats.” (Ref. 2.2) Recognition of “environmentally sensitive areas” (ESA) in this nationally regarded biogeoclimatic zone is very important. The Coastal Douglas-fir Zone (CDF) is in a state of crisis. (We note that by association with the CVRD, the Municipality is a fellow member of the [Coastal Douglas-fir Conservation Partnership](#).) The present OCP policy commitment rightly pledges to “maintain, protect, and restore ecosystems and address threats to biodiversity” (Ref. 2.2.1.2) and the CDF in particular. (Ref. 2.2.1.4) “The Municipality, in partnership with land trusts or environmental non-government organizations, may acquire environmentally sensitive areas for habitat protection.” (Ref. 2.2.1.2.g) The Municipality is to be lauded for its follow-through on this as we can point to a number of collaborative examples in recent years with the CCLT.

We appreciate the present OCPs aspiration for parks acquisition especially when it entails the capture of important natural assets such as “forests and environmentally sensitive areas that have been retained in a natural undisturbed state and which meet municipal environmental protection goals.” (Ref. 2.5.8.4) We embrace the partnership aspect expressed in this section and again note our mutual collaboration in the past.

A strong municipal support for incentivizing donors can not be underestimated. “The Municipality will assist prospective donors in determining their eligibility for charitable donation tax receipts and preferential tax treatment.” (Ref. 2.5.8.5.d) In this connection we draw your attention to models of conservation tax incentivization already practiced by the Islands Trust Natural Areas Protection Tax Incentive Program (NAPTEP). This initiative has been supported more widely by a Union of BC Municipalities resolution in 2015 and the BC Ministry of Environment. The [Conservation Tax Exemption Program](#) would assist in expanding ecological protection on private lands while minimizing any Municipal tax impact.

The CCLT recommends that the new OCP contain specific notice regarding the option for landowners concerned about the long-term preservation of environmental values and features of their property to enter into a conservation covenant with a non-governmental conservation organization.



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In summary:

The OCP is an ambitious document in that it attempts to incorporate the input of all citizens and formulates specific policies and actions that will guide Municipal government over time. As requested, we have provided some input to this process. However, we recognize that the OCP also encourages actions that private citizens can take to preserve environmental values that do not necessarily require Municipal government involvement. This promotional aspect of the OCP is important too as it can serve to inform the public about environmental education activities, habitat restoration work, and the preservation of land features through the establishment of conservation covenants with land trust organizations.

It is recognized that this consultation process will attempt to synthesize diverse perspectives and advice. Be assured that once deliberations are concluded the CCLT stands ready to assist in and be a part of MNC community land protection initiatives.

With appreciation for this opportunity to contribute to this community process,

Jim Ayers
President
Cowichan Community Land Trust